

distorting the facts, by continuing to perpetuate the myth that Turkish Cypriots and Turkey are solely to blame for this incident, I fear that such statements only undermine the good faith efforts of the United States, the European Union and other members of the international community to finally see this conflict resolved; and to see peace and prosperity come to all the people of Cyprus.

Tragically, an historic opportunity to resolve the crisis was lost when the Annan Plan, a UN-brokered proposal to settle the dispute, was soundly defeated by the Greek Cypriots in April 2004. Although the plan had broad support from the international community, and was ratified by the Turkish Cypriots, the Greek Cypriots inexplicably rejected the proposal by a 3 to 1 margin. Those individuals and special interest groups who adhere to the "blame Turkey" school of thought on the status of Cyprus seem to ignore the irony of the fact that when offered the chance to vote for peace, it was the Greek and not the Turkish side that rejected peace.

After the referendum, then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan reported to the Security Council that "the Turkish Cypriot vote has undone any rationale for pressuring and isolating them;" he called for all Security Council members to "give a strong lead to all States to cooperate both bilaterally and in international bodies, to eliminate unnecessary restrictions and barriers that have the effect of isolating the Turkish Cypriots and impeding their development." Unfortunately, while the Greek Cypriots became full members of the European Union, little changed for the Turkish Cypriots and their economic and political isolation continues to this day.

Despite the Greek Cypriots' failure to embrace peace and the international community's failure to end the economic isolation of the Turkish Cypriots; Turkish Cypriots continued to seek a just and a peaceful settlement to this crisis. Unfortunately, the issue was at a virtual standstill until recent elections in southern Cyprus brought a new Greek leadership to the forefront who seems more willing to reach a settlement.

In fact, the two leaders in Cyprus, Greek Cypriot Demetris Christofias and Turkish Cypriot Mehmet Ali Talat, met on July 1, 2008 and achieved a remarkable breakthrough by striking an agreement in principle on the issue of a single sovereignty and citizenship. They also agreed to meet again on July 25th to prepare for the first full-fledged negotiations in four years. United States Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Daniel Fried, who has followed the talks closely, has said that: "There's a chance . . . that we will be moving forward again in a way we haven't in some time." He has also hinted that the Administration is considering appointing a special envoy to Cyprus.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate the Greek and Turkish Cypriot Leaders for their recent courageous steps; and I sincerely hope that when they meet again a few days from today that they will get down to the real work of reshaping Cyprus into a peaceful island that respects human rights and the fundamental freedoms for all Cypriots. I also sincerely hope that all of my colleagues will learn from their example and join with me to end the 'blame game,' and instead advocate for an even handed approach to the thorny issue that is Cyprus, an approach that recognizes the fun-

damental equality of all Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

RECOGNIZING THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE'S GRASS-ROOTS PROGRAM

HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

Mr. ROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the National Football League, NFL, for its continuing efforts to improve the lives of America's youth both on and off the field.

In 1998, the NFL and NFL Players Association organized the NFL Youth Football Fund, YFF, which is a non-profit foundation that supports the game of football at the youth level and promotes positive youth development. This wonderful organization has provided hundreds of thousands of children with the opportunity to learn the game of football, stay physically active, and get involved in productive after-school activities with positive role models.

One important initiative that the YFF has undertaken is its Grassroots Field Refurbishment Program. This unique program provides funds for communities to revamp local athletic fields so that youth have a safe place for athletic activities. The fields are newly built or significantly renovated, with improvements such as irrigation systems, lights, bleachers, scoreboards, goal posts and turf. The YFF has contributed nearly \$23 million through the Grassroots Program to rebuild 170 fields nationwide in underserved areas.

The NFL recently awarded a \$200,000 grant to the Jersey City public schools to help replace the playing field at Cochrane Stadium in the Caven Point Athletic Complex, which is located in my home state of New Jersey. The field was closed in April 2008 because of concerns about high levels of lead found in the astroturf surface. The sports complex at Caven Point is an integral part of youth athletics in Hudson County and many of my constituents use these facilities. I am extremely pleased that the NFL is assisting the community in this way.

I am honored to have an outstanding NFL franchise such as the Giants, who are the Super Bowl XLII Champions, play in my Congressional district at their home field of Giants Stadium in East Rutherford. Our local community continues to proudly support the Giants and is grateful that the NFL has selected Jersey City to receive a grant to improve their local athletic playing field.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join with me today in commending the National Football League for its consistent support of our youth across the country. I also ask for unanimous consent to enter an article from the Jersey Journal into the RECORD.

[From the Jersey Journal, June 10, 2008]

NFL GIVING \$200G TO HELP REPLACE TURF AT COCHRANE STADIUM

(By Ken Thorbourne)

The National Football League is chipping in to replace an athletic field in Jersey City that was closed in April due to concerns about lead. The National Football League Grassroots Program announced the \$200,000

grant to the Jersey City public schools to help replace the heavily used Cochrane Stadium field at the Caven Point Athletic Complex last week.

"The district is thrilled the NFL is supporting local athletics," said Board of Education spokesman Gerard Crisonino. "We see it as a real commitment to the students of Jersey City."

Cochrane Stadium—along with the field at Frank Sinatra Park in Hoboken—were closed after elevated levels of lead were found in the synthetic fibers. The Hoboken field has already been replaced.

Crisonino said a new field at Caven Point is expected to cost \$1.1 million. In addition to the NFL grant, the district expects to receive city and county money. Specifications are being drawn up to bid the contract, he added.

Elevated lead levels were also found at the College of New Jersey's Lions Stadium Field in Ewing, which also has a synthetic turf field.

"Fields are an integral part of creating viable and healthy communities," NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell said in a statement. "The development and refurbishment of these football fields give youngsters a safe place to play the game, and brings families and neighborhoods together."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, on Tuesday, July 22, 2008, I was unavoidably detained in my congressional district and had I been present and voting, I would have voted as follows: (1) rollcall No. 512: "yes" on Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass H.R. 6493; (2) rollcall No. 513: "yes" on Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass H. Res. 1311; (3) rollcall No. 514: "yes" on Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass H. Res. 1202.

RECOGNIZING THE 34TH ANNIVERSARY OF TURKEY'S INVASION OF CYPRUS

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, as a proud member of the Hellenic Caucus, I rise today to recognize the 34th anniversary of Turkey's invasion of Cyprus. On this occasion, we mourn those who lost their lives and remember the barrier created in 1974 that still exists today. The island remains divided between the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots, despite attempts by the international community for a reunification settlement.

I have repeatedly emphasized the need for a peaceful settlement to the ongoing division in Cyprus—a goal that has eluded American and European leaders for more than thirty years. I believe that a strong U.S. commitment to Cyprus should be one of our nation's top foreign policy priorities. As Americans, we must guarantee that our foreign policy reflects our values of justice, equality and responsibility, and promoting a lasting peace and stability in Cyprus illustrates those values.